



Healthy Women in Georgia

2006



Scaling Up for Success



USAID
აშშ-ის საერთაშორისო განვითარების აგენცია



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HEALTHY WOMEN IN GEORGIA: AN OVERVIEW

The Healthy Women in Georgia Program (HWG) improves women's health care by developing effective, time-tested, family-friendly services. HWG modernizes pregnancy and newborn care, provides counseling and education services, and expands access to family planning services in the Tbilisi, Imereti, and Kakheti regions.

HWG works with communities to improve women's health by:

- ◆ improving the quality of health services;
- ◆ increasing knowledge of health-promoting practices; and
- ◆ creating effective health support systems.

The HWG program began in September 2003. In its third year, HWG continued to train health care providers to provide quality prenatal care, safe delivery, and family planning services, leading to

impressive changes in patient care throughout the areas where HWG works. Local health educators shared valuable health information with their communities; Parents' Schools prepared young couples for childbirth; and new "family-friendly" delivery rooms revolutionized labor and delivery in Georgia.

HWG is implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc., in collaboration with Save the Children, Fund Orthos, CLARITAS XXI, Caucasus Social Marketing Foundation (CSMA), HERA, the Curatio International Foundation (CIF), and McCann Erickson. HWG is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



MAP OF GEORGIA & PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



Program Objectives:

1. To expand access to, and utilization of, family planning.
2. To make pregnancy safer through promotion of evidence-based, family-friendly maternity and antenatal care.
3. To promote positive health-seeking reproductive health behavior through creation of informed and pro-active health consumers.
4. To encourage healthy lifestyles among young people.

“I am involved in reproductive health because I understand that it’s really true that the family goes through the mother. If we respect and take care of the mother, it will affect the children and father as well.”

- First Lady Sandra Roelofs

This report provides information about HWG’s projects during 2006: improving access to family planning services, making pregnancy safer, and our informational and educational campaign. Each section explains our current and future directions in more detail:

Improving access to family planning:

- **Contraceptive distribution, training, and logistical support**, improving women’s access to contraceptives and family planning counseling in Georgia.

Safe motherhood:

- **Professional training courses** to learn about birthing best practices.
- **Supportive supervision** to follow up on training and lessons learned.
- **“Family-friendly” delivery rooms** to make birthing a safer and happier experience for all.



Reaching communities through education:

- **Parents’ Schools** to teach expecting parents all about prenatal care.
- **Healthy Lifestyles Courses** to teach adolescents about important health issues.
- **Breast health** conference, educational sessions,



and breast cancer awareness walk to provide information and support.

- **Community events** to provide opportunities to bring communities together and share health information.
- **A media campaign** including billboards, hotline, and radio and television spots that promote contraception as the modern choice and discuss other reproductive and women’s health issues.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING

Introduction

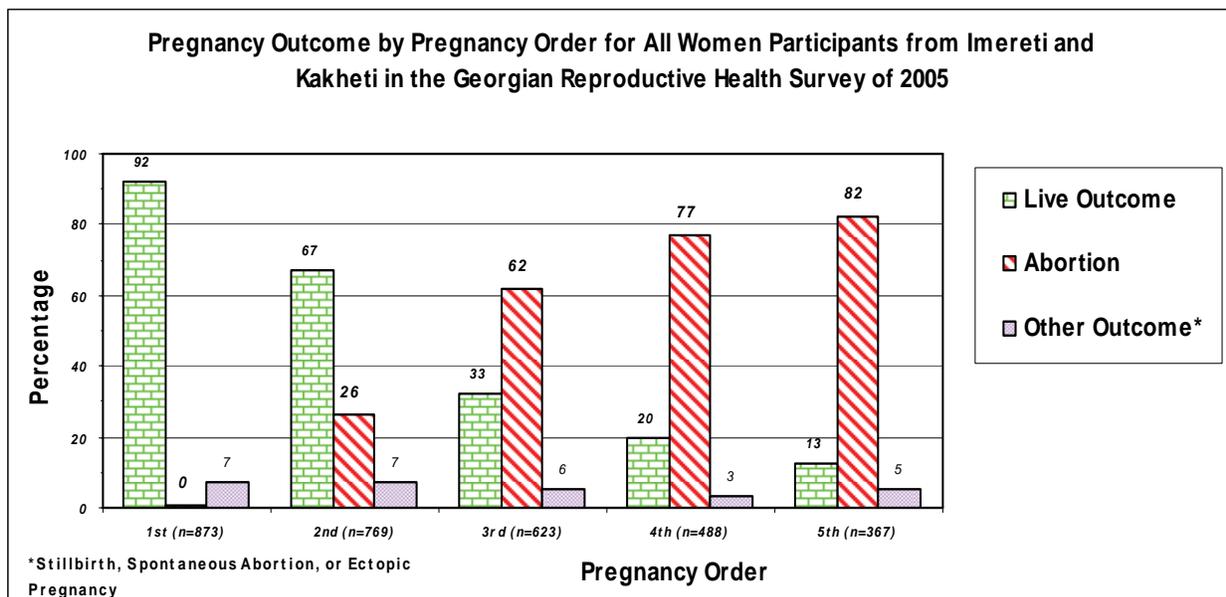
HWG program's family planning approach is modeled after Romania's successful "three pillars" strategy consisting of:

- 1) training healthcare providers;
- 2) distributing contraceptives; and
- 3) educating the public.

Substantial strides were made in 2006 in improving access to contraceptives. In addition to expanding access to USAID-donated contraceptives, systems for contraceptive logistics training, storage, distribution, record keeping, and reporting were also strengthened. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Social Affairs (MoHLSA) of Georgia designated logistics coordinators in Imereti and Kakheti, and the Regional Departments of Health continue to be an active HWG partner.

Why it Matters

Georgian women now use abortion to limit their family size because they lack adequate information, access to family planning services, and the means to pay for a continuous supply of contraceptives. This is especially true in rural areas, where HWG and its partners focuses its work.

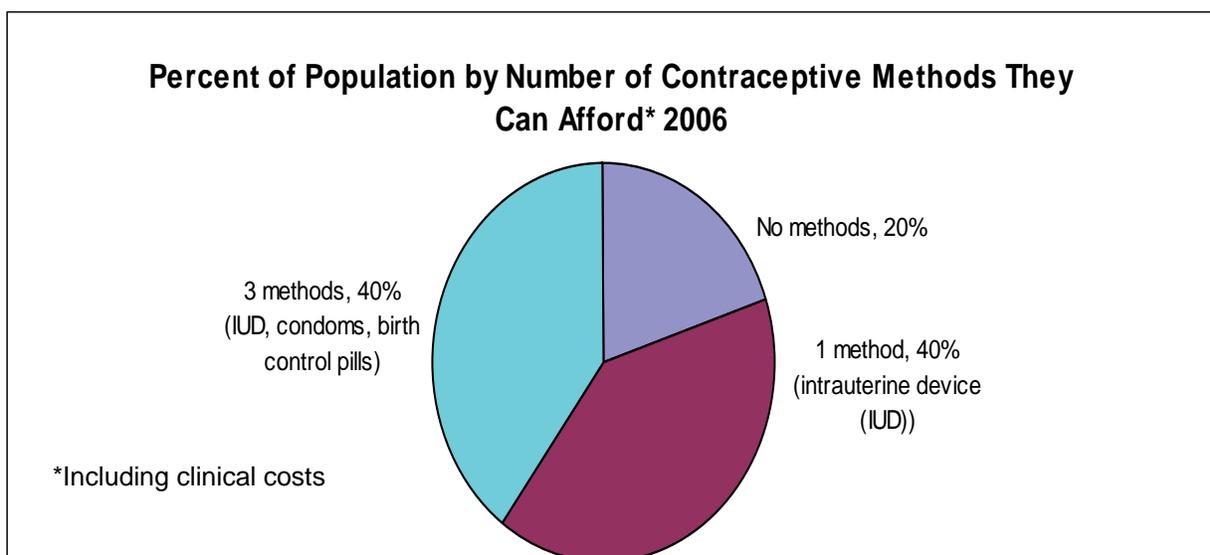


Source: The National Center for Statistics 2005 Reproductive Health Survey

This graph demonstrates that after their second pregnancy women increasingly use abortion. Abortion is the main method of family planning, a mainstay since the days of Soviet medicine, when contraceptives were limited. Increased contraceptive use will not decrease birth rates, but instead will serve as an alternative to abortion.

“The contraceptive logistics system is elegantly simple in design and operation.”

-Jim Bates, JSI DELIVER



Analyses of Georgians’ ability to pay for a year’s supply for contraceptives was conducted in 2004 and 2006. The majority of the population still cannot afford most contraceptives. Twenty percent cannot afford any brand of any method, and 60% cannot afford condoms or birth control pills. Therefore, donated contraceptives are important for much of the population.

What We Did

- Beginning in December 2005, **contraceptives were distributed to program-assisted primary healthcare facilities**. Now 192 clinics have a continuous supply of birth control pills and condoms which they distribute free-of-charge.
- A **contraceptive logistics system was established** in partnership with the MoHLSA of Georgia. This system ensures a continuous contraceptive supply to all program sites. Twelve coordinators in Imereti, eight in Kakheti, and two regional coordinators have been trained and play key roles in implementing the system.
- Many different types of **healthcare providers were trained in family planning** in 2006, including nurses, midwives, pediatricians, family doctors, and Ob/Gyns. Providers were trained to provide family planning counseling whenever possible, particularly during prenatal, postpartum, and post-abortion care. The training programs are recognized by the government and earn participants precious **continuing education credits**.
- **Supportive supervision visits** were made to HWG-assisted facilities. During visits, HWG staff observed providers and interviewed clients to help identify problems, solutions, and new opportunities. These visits are important to help providers use their newly-learned knowledge and skills and to ensure quality services.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING

- **Pharmacists were trained in family planning** methods. Pharmacists learned how to provide quick, informative messages to customers regarding the effectiveness, advantages, disadvantages, and usage instructions for different contraceptive methods.
- An innovative **youth-friendly pharmacy initiative** was started in 2006. Pharmacists learned about reproductive health issues that affect adolescents. They also learned how their pharmacy can provide a welcoming environment to encourage youth to use them as a source of reproductive health information and services.

Adolescents chose the design on the Right To Be—the logo for the youth-friendly pharmacy initiative. This logo will identify pharmacies trained and equipped to provide youth-friendly reproductive health information and services.



What Comes Next?

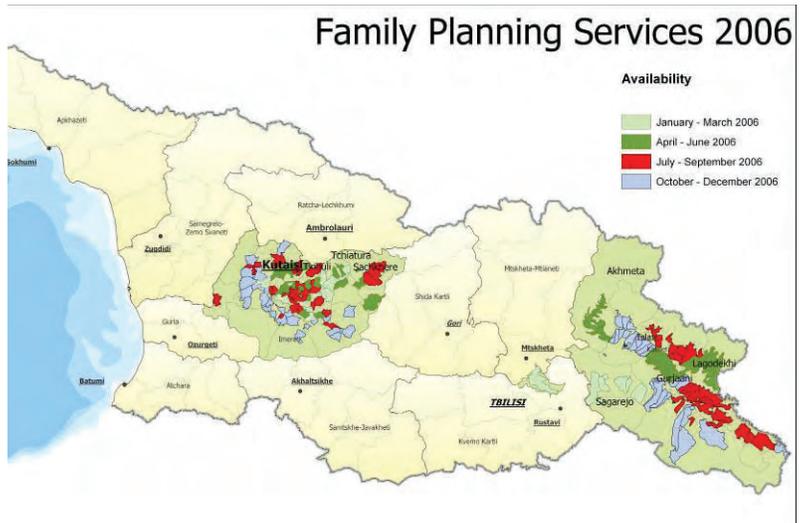
Contraceptive distribution will be expanded to up to 400 new village clinics in 2007.



“Without government investments in the provision of contraceptives through public sector clinics and donor (or government) support for subsidized products in the commercial sector, substantial segments of the population of family planning users will be unable to pay for contraceptives.” – Rao and McClauglin in Republic of Georgia *Ability to Pay for Contraceptives Report, 2006*

Program-assisted village clinics providing free condoms and birth control pills, 2006.

This map shows the increase throughout 2006 in the number of local clinics where pediatricians and family doctors provide free USAID-donated contraceptives to their communities. There are now 192 such clinics.



The “Tatino” Effect: A Satisfied Pill User Creates a Wave of Others

Tato Chikvadze, the mother of two boys, wants to maintain the size of her family without having to resort to abortion. Last year, she consulted Ketii, an Ob/Gyn, who suggested Tato try birth control pills. Tato told Ketii that she had tried birth control pills ten years earlier and that they had made her gain weight. Ketii explained that the birth control pill currently on the market has a lower estrogen dosage than before, causing fewer side effects. Tato decided to try it. It has now been more than a year since she started. “I am very, very satisfied,” Tato says.

As part of her job, Tato meets with women in villages to inform them about contraceptives available free-of-charge in their local health centers. Now Tato has a personal story to share with the women as well. “I recommend for them to take birth control pills if it’s possible (because the pill isn’t right for everyone, and women should be counseled first)—and I always tell them my example. The pill is effective, comfortable, practical, easy to use, and has very good additional effects.” Tato has not gained weight, and her skin has cleared up.



Immediately after Tato’s presentations, approximately 75% of the women stay to receive contraceptive counseling from a trained family physician, and they too become new birth control pill users. What is usually called the domino effect could be renamed the “Tatino” effect for Tato’s ability to convey factual and personal information about the pill to other women, thereby contributing to their decisions to employ this effective method of family planning as well.

Tato, a satisfied birth control pill user, shares her positive experiences with others.

SAFE MOTHERHOOD

Introduction

In 2006 HWG trained Ob/Gyns, neonatologists, and midwives and nurses in modern, effective perinatal care; renovated delivery rooms for a safer and more comfortable birthing experience; and taught expecting couples fundamental information about what to expect during pregnancy and delivery. The results have been dramatic: improved medical practices among doctors and other professionals, healthier and happier mothers and children, and fathers involved for the first time in their wives' pregnancies.

What We Did

- During **an observation visit to Ukraine**, Georgian health professionals and health ministry officials learned from Ukraine's experience implementing best practices in safe motherhood. The participating obstetricians, newborn pediatricians, and midwives are now enthusiastic—even those who were initially resistant to change.
- **A World Health Organization course, Effective Perinatal Care, was introduced** in five Imereti maternity hospitals in 2006. Georgian clinicians learned about best practices during labor and delivery, and the crucial period just after delivery, when newborn morbidity is highest.

Why it Matters

The death of a mother or an infant is a great tragedy, yet it is often preventable. Maternal and infant mortality rates are **four times higher** in Georgia than in the European Union, a number that can be greatly reduced by making small changes in current practices:

- Postpartum hemorrhage (bleeding after giving birth) is the most common cause of maternal death worldwide. Yet it can often be prevented by simple and cost effective measures such as active management of third stage labor, which includes injection of oxytocin immediately after birth, controlled cord traction, and uterus massage.
- Simple and inexpensive "warm chain" method helps protect against hypothermia, when the baby's body temperature is too low. The "warm chain" method, which includes breastfeeding immediately after birth and providing skin to-skin contact to newborns, could prevent an estimated 20% of infant deaths that occur during the first hours of life in Georgia.

“We are amazed. You have obtained important outcomes. Georgia could do in five months what Lithuania did in seven years and Ukraine in five years. I am delighted with local health providers’ enthusiasm and responsibility to work.”

- World Health Organization expert, Dr. Gelmius Suspinkas

- **Supervision visits with the purpose of supporting clinical staff** were set up to reinforce information gained during training, such as the importance of up-to-date labor and delivery practices. Supervisors discussed the challenges clinicians encountered and together brainstormed possible solutions that could be implemented.
- **Delivery rooms were both renovated and equipped** to provide high-quality, and, most importantly, family-centered care. Women in Georgia often give birth in a room with up to three others, meaning little privacy and no chance for their partners to be present during labor. HWG-renovated delivery rooms are set up for just one delivering woman, with ample space for a companion to support her during the delivery process.



The two-week World Health Organization course in Effective Perinatal Care included case studies and hands-on clinical practice.

What Comes Next?

In early 2007, **international trainers from the Effective Perinatal Care course will train Georgian doctors and midwives to become trainers themselves.** With locally-based trainers, the courses will be taught more frequently, reaching a greater number of clinicians in a cost-effective manner.

HWG will **expand its maternal care programs** to eight additional hospitals (in Tbilisi, Sagarejo, Gori, Ozurgeti, and Zugdidi) while continuing to work with the Georgian government and other partners to promote effective practices for maternal and newborn care.

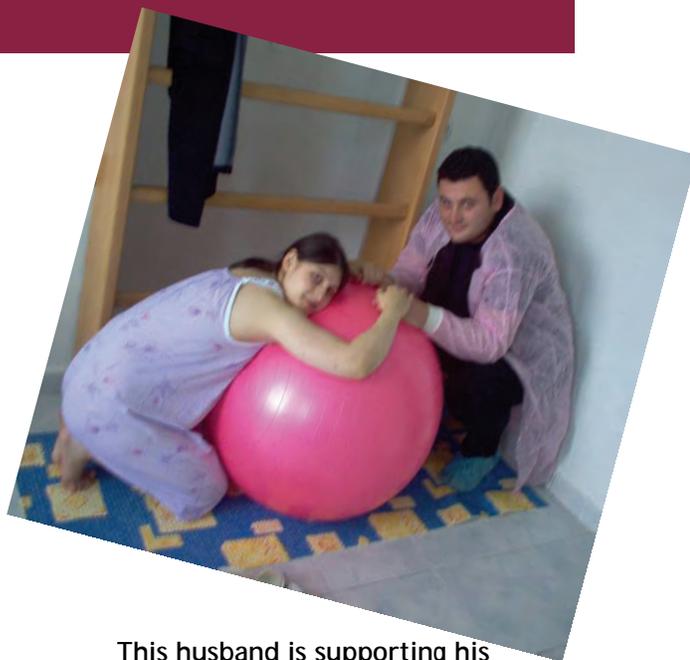
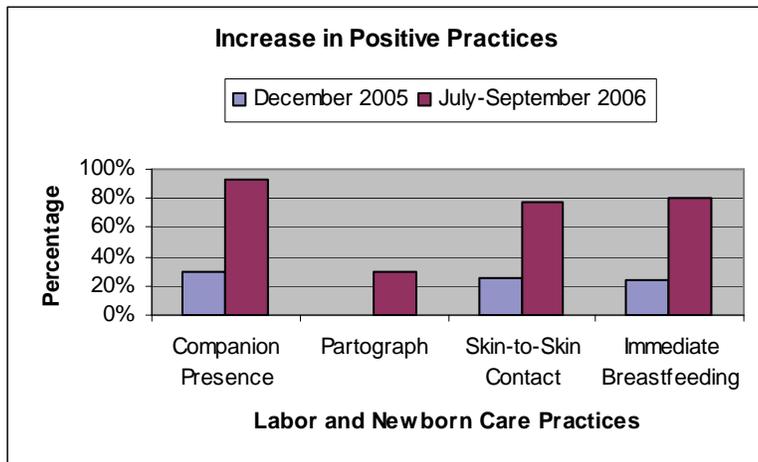


This newly renovated delivery room in the Kutaisi Obstetric-Gynecological Hospital includes labor aids such as a large ball, a comfortable delivery bed, and a radiant warmer for newborns.

“Health education gives you a chance to participate in saving your own life.”

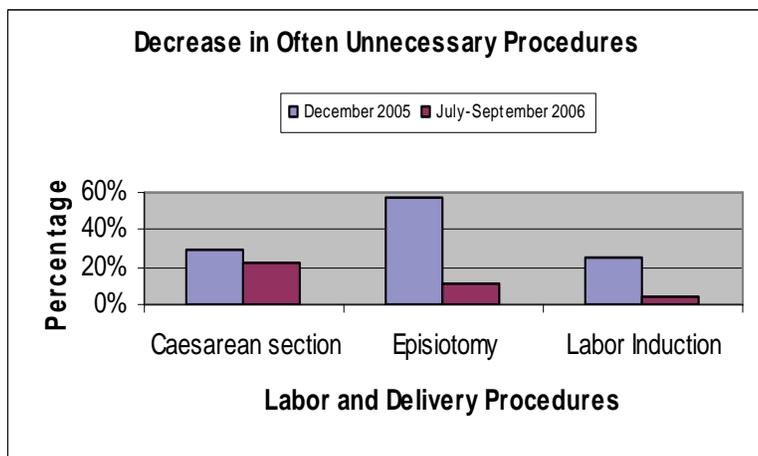
- Dr. Keti Nemsadze, Vice President of CLARITAS

Labor, Delivery, and Newborn Care Practices



This husband is supporting his wife during labor at the Chiatura Maternity Hospital. In Georgia, men are usually absent when their wives are giving birth, but studies show that companion delivery leads to fewer overall complications.

These graphs illustrate the dramatic improvements in labor and delivery practices and in newborn care at the following HWG-assisted facilities in Imereti: Kutaisi Obstetric-Gynecological Hospital, Chiatura Maternity Hospital, Zestaphoni Maternity Hospital, and Regional Maternal & Children’s Treatment-Diagnostic Center. Professional clinical training, modern equipment, classes for new parents, supportive supervision, and, most importantly, changes in the attitudes of health providers led to improved care and better results for women and their babies.



A new father is providing skin-to-skin contact for his daughter while his wife recovers from a cesarean section. This simple practice helps prevent newborn death and makes daddies cry!

Reaching Communities Through Education: Parents' School Classes

Parents' Schools, set up in women's health centers around Imereti and run by trained doctors, teach expecting couples about crucial issues and address their concerns, such as what will happen during the birthing process, how to take care of themselves and their newborns, and important danger signs during pregnancy. Couples who attend Parents' Schools, often young and expecting for the first time, say they were confident when giving birth and felt a closer bond to their partner after completing the program.



Parents' Schools were offered in four sites in Imereti and one in Tbilisi in 2006. The curriculum was revised this year to make sure that participants who can only attend one session are provided with crucial information, such as danger signs to watch for during pregnancy.

What Comes Next?

Parents' Schools will expand to five additional sites next year in Gori, Zugdidi, Kakheti, and two in Tbilisi.

Irma's Story:

"I discovered that despite three previous pregnancies, I knew almost nothing about this important period in my life."

Irma Bregvadze thought she was an expert on pregnancies. After all, she had experienced three before. "This is my fourth one," she says. "I always thought that there was nothing left that I didn't know about pregnancy and delivery." But after attending Parents' School classes, she realizes how much she can learn. "I discovered that despite my three previous pregnancies, I knew almost nothing about this important period in my life." Parents' School classes, she says, gave her "in-depth knowledge and skills" about how to go through the "magic nine months of pregnancy and delivery." After having experienced painful deliveries in the past, she says that she is no longer afraid of giving birth now that Parents' School taught her about pain-coping techniques. Best of all Irma says, was what Parents' School did for her relationship with her husband. "Most importantly, my husband will be next to me. We will go together through the wonders of childbirth."

When Irma went into labor, her husband Arsen joined her for the first time, supporting her throughout the delivery, which was without complications. She gave birth to her fourth child, a healthy boy.

Reaching Communities Through Education: Healthy Lifestyles Course and Adolescent Peer Educators

Many Georgians get married and start families at young ages, so the adolescents of today are the parents of tomorrow. Education is key to enabling good decision making about health issues.

was initiated, were very eager to participate in the course, and most participating schools were selected based on the school directors' request.

- 225 adolescents who attended the HLC were trained as **peer educators** in 2006. They lead lessons in classrooms and share health information more informally in conversations with their peers.



A group of peer educators in training consult with trainer, Shota Makharadze, while preparing a lesson about the dangers of drug use.

What Were the Results?

A study of knowledge, attitudes, and practices conducted by HWG found that the students who attended a HLC knew significantly more than their peers on topics covered during the course, particularly HIV transmission, complications of early pregnancy, and modern contraceptive methods. The results also pointed to issues where HLC students did not know more than their peers; the future HLC curriculum will make a special effort to focus on these topics in particular.

What We Did

- 1,050 high school students from 25 schools participated in a **Healthy Lifestyles Course (HLC)**, where they learned about the effects of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse; reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV; and the drawbacks of early marriage. Students at the Imereti schools where the program

What Comes Next?

The HLC will be expanded to 65 new schools in 2007, covering all the districts in Imereti and reaching 2,500 students. HWG will train 650 peer educators and 130 school teachers on HLC topics.

“Friends have increasingly become a main source of reproductive health information regardless of gender, age or location. Therefore, the outreach strategy of well informed and accepted peer educators needs to be strengthened and expanded.”

- Larry Dershem, Save the Children

Peer Educators Learn How to Teach About Healthy Lifestyles

“Why is it important to know about HIV/AIDS?” Kristina Kavtaradze asks the class. The other future peer educators raise their hands. “To know that you do not have to avoid HIV-positive people,” one responds. “If you have this information you can avoid HIV, because you know what all the risky behaviors are,” another says.

Kristina and the others are participating in a two-day training for peer educators after being handpicked for the program. They all participated in HWG’s six-session, six-week long after-school Healthy Lifestyle Course at their high schools. Engaged and excited about the program, they will lead similar sessions in their schools and hold more informal discussions with their peers.

The peer educators say they find the program invaluable. During a conversation about what they gained from the training, the students talk about new knowledge, new skills, and new friends. For their last activity during training, they break into small groups to present short class sections, an example of the programs they will take back to their schools and peers.

“I will be very happy to share my new knowledge with my peers,” Irma says at the end, with a suggestion for the future: “It would be good if the program was expanded, and if more youth could be involved.”



Kristina practices leading a session about HIV/AIDS during a peer education training. Peer educators learn about smoking, alcohol, drug use, puberty, sexually transmitted infections, and the drawbacks of early marriage, which they then teach to their peers.

We think Irma is right. Feedback from peer educators as well as survey results show that the program was successful among students, and HWG will expand the HLC to 65 new schools next year.

Reaching Communities Through Education: Breast Health Promotion

What We Did

- Community nurse educators conducted group **educational sessions on breast self-examination techniques and on family planning** with 2,784 women in Imereti. Over 700 women also received free breast examinations at Imereti's Women's Wellness Center, where 174 women with breast masses were referred to the National Cancer Center in Tbilisi for further examination and diagnosis. Of these, 140 women had benign breast masses and three were diagnosed with cancer.
- A **conference** brought together over 100 professionals working to improve breast health. Participants shared best practices and learned about community resources. Working together, organizations will be able to reach a wider audience and have a greater impact.



Women leading the Second Annual Breast Health Awareness Walk in Kutaisi, where 1,750 men, women, and children participated.

- During the **Second Annual Breast Health Awareness Walk**, men, women, and children marched on the streets of Kutaisi to raise awareness about breast cancer and the importance of early detection. The walk is one of HWG's most popular events and provides much-needed media attention for one of the biggest health concerns facing Georgian women.



First Lady Sandra Roelofs was one of many women shown proper breast self-examination techniques at the Breast Health Awareness Walk. Her attendance ensured that media stations were on hand for the event.

“If I could tell other women something, I would say to pay attention to your health, and especially to breast health, because you can be cured if you catch it in time.”

- Tsiola Rostiashvili, breast cancer survivor

Tsiola's Message

When Tsiola Rostiashvili found a lump in her breast, she did not tell anyone. Her husband had just died, and she was afraid of burdening her children. Because she waited to get treatment, she is now fighting for her life.



U.S. Ambassador Tefft and Mrs. Mariella Tefft with Tsiola, a breast cancer survivor, attended the Second Annual Breast Health Awareness Walk.

Like many women in Georgia, Tsiola knew about breast cancer only from her family and friends before being diagnosed. Thanks to HERA's community education sessions teaching self-examination, some 2,800 women in Imereti learned about breast health and early detection methods in 2006.

The number of women who know how to perform breast self-examinations has increased over the last few years in part due to such information campaigns. Following last year's Breast Health Awareness Walk, more women visited Imereti's Women's Wellness Center for clinical breast exams than in previous years. Since breast cancer was detected earlier than it would have been otherwise, these women have greatly increased their chances of survival.

“Health is the most important thing,” Tsiola said. Learning from her trial with cancer, Tsiola says she is happy that her daughter and granddaughter now know about life-saving early detection methods.

Girls soak up information about the importance of early detection at the Breast Health Awareness Walk. A woman is never too young to learn about her health.



Reaching Communities Through Education: Events and Campaigns

What We Did

- **Community events** increased awareness of women's health issues. These events took place on New Year's, International Women's Day, AIDS Memorial Day, and World AIDS Day.
- **108 Village Health Educators** met with men and women to discuss family planning methods and safe motherhood in ten communities in the Kakheti region.
- **Website.** The award-winning Georgian language website, www.jsi.ge, targeted a general audience as well as medical specialists, answering frequently-asked questions and providing medical information available for download. The website had 20,175 hits and 7,001 downloads in 2006, including some from abroad. Content was broadened, and translations into both Russian and English will soon be posted.
- A **hotline**, set up to allow anonymous callers to ask questions about reproductive health and healthy lifestyles, received 2,989 calls. It received an increase in calls following the start of television spots on modern contraception.



This theater performance during AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day shared information about HIV/AIDS in an engaging way.

Village events—such as this awards ceremony for mothers—provide opportunities to bring people together for entertainment and health messages.



Reaching Communities Through Education: Events and Campaigns

- **Television talk show series** aired on one of Georgia's most popular television channels. Each show, presented along with a question-and-answer period, covered an important health topic. The series had shows on family-friendly childbirth, pharmacists and their role as first-line medical advisors, different types of modern contraception, the health needs of adolescents, and prenatal care.
- **Radio spots and programs** were broadcast on a variety of health topics, such as the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, puberty and adolescents, danger signs during pregnancy, and the negative effects of smoking.
- Three professional and engaging **television commercials** were aired with the utilization of the hotline: "Contraception: The Modern Choice." The campaign was also publicized on ten visually-striking **billboards** throughout Georgia.
- A **Georgian language website** was launched, which provides one of the few places where people can get accurate reproductive health information in the Georgian language.

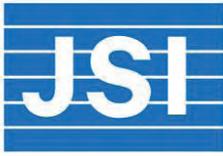


This billboard in Kakheti promotes contraception with the message: "Contraception: The Modern Choice." Television commercials and other billboards throughout Georgia also promoted this message.



Television talk shows brought together experts, celebrities, and Parents' School graduates to talk about important health issues.

HEALTHY WOMEN IN GEORGIA PARTNERS



JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. —A Boston-based public health management firm, JSI is dedicated to providing high quality technical and managerial assistance to public health programs throughout the world. JSI provides evidence-based management assistance, information, and training designed to improve access to, quality, and equity of health systems worldwide. JSI collaborates with local partners to assist governments, communities, and individuals to develop their own skills and identify solutions to their public health needs. JSI is a recognized leader in implementing innovative programs in a range of public health areas, including reproductive and women's health, family planning, maternal health, child survival, STIs and HIV/AIDS, health systems management, organizational development, health financing, and policy development. JSI leads the HWG program and implements it along with its partner organizations.



JSI staff at the Tbilisi office pose for a picture after a meeting about the expansion of the Electronic Forms System, which will improve the storage and accessibility of program monitoring data.

What motivates them?

"Most of all what motivates me is an opportunity to make positive changes and to participate in ongoing healthcare reform," Dr. Lia Umikashvili.



CLARITAS XXI – Children's rights protection association CLARITAS XXI, one of the first nongovernmental organizations established in Georgia, advocates for the rights and welfare of mothers and their children by implementing pediatric training and service programs. Their work includes improving newborn care in maternity houses. Additionally, CLARITAS XXI works on law elaboration, including a regulation to protect against the aggressive marketing of infant formula. Through the HWG program, CLARITAS XXI implements innovative reproductive health and family planning training and outreach activities among pediatricians and nurses in the Gladi-Nadzaladevi district of Tbilisi, promotes family planning with mothers and in larger communities, and conducts surveys about reproductive health. Additionally, CLARITAS XXI provides information on reproductive, maternal, and child health from their telephone hotline and through their informational brochures.



CLARITAS XXI employees Ketis Sharangia, Ketis Nemsadze, and Tamar Bakhtadze discuss their brochures which provide important and easy-to-understand information about women's and children's health issues.

What motivates them?

"Our main motivation is that we can change the situation," Dr. Ketis Nemsadze. **"To assist our people, we're growing as doctors, and our organization is our home."** Dr. Ketis Sharangia.

“HWG is an exciting project because it combines deep commitment to people with outstanding public health technical capabilities. It is also a lot of fun!”

- Nancy Pendarvis Harris, HWG Director



Ketevan Chkhatarashvili, Tiniko Shishinashvili, and Nodar Gvetadze from CIF are busy preparing a ceremony to celebrate the village educators' work discussing family planning with community members.

Curatio International Foundation (CIF), which was founded in 1994, supports reforms in the health, social, and education sectors, with a focus on health sector reforms throughout Central Asia, Africa, and the South Caucasus. CIF assists governments in designing primary health care reform strategies; in planning and implementing policies, programs, and activities; in hospital sector restructuring; and in health care financing. **“Whatever we plan or advise, the purpose is to change the health care system to have a positive impact on people,”** Dr. Ketevan Chkhatarashvili says. **“All this experience is brought back to our native country,”** Ketevan says. **“We have the luxury of using experiences from all over the world in Georgia, so why not do it?”** CIF works with HWG by collecting and analyzing women's health data as well as by developing health policy briefs on issues relating to HWG program strategies. CIF also trains village educators in the Kakheti region, organizes community events, and conducts family planning trainings for healthcare providers.

What motivates them?

“I like the contact with people in the regions; this project is very important for them because usually nobody takes care of people in the villages,” Dr. Nodar Gvetadze.



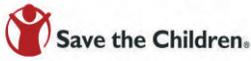
Tamar Chikvaizde and Eka Pestvenidze from Fund Orthos discuss their work with the Parents' School and client advocacy meetings.

Fund Orthos was founded by pediatricians in 1997 to prevent maternal and child morbidity and to rehabilitate disabled children, with an increasing focus on the prevention of disabilities. Since some child disabilities result from poor antenatal and maternity care, in 2000, Fund Orthos established Parents' Schools that educate expecting parents about prenatal and reproductive health issues, reducing the potential for disabilities at the root of the problem. In partnership with HWG, Fund Orthos has established three additional Parents' Schools in the Imereti region, in Kutaisi, Zestaponi, and Chiatura respectively. Fund Orthos also runs the HWG program's client advocacy component, where they organize meetings with women in target communities to discuss modern contraceptives.

What motivates them?

“We're doing very innovative and necessary work for Georgia. Before, no one thought about education on pregnancy. We have very positively influenced the outcome of many pregnancies. That's why I enjoy working here,” Dr. Eka Pestvenidze.

HEALTHY WOMEN IN GEORGIA PARTNERS



Save the Children is an international relief and development organization working with children in need around the world. Through the HWG program, Save the Children organizes the Healthy Lifestyles Course for adolescents, leads the youth-friendly pharmacy initiative, oversees radio campaigns, and organizes community mobilization activities for youth in target communities in the Imereti region. **“The best thing is that the program helps break the taboos that exist to openly discuss reproductive health issues,”** Ekaterine Kikatunidze says. “And since we have the chance to speak with parents too, many parents more openly discuss these issues with their children. This was very different one to two years ago,” Dr. Nana Kvirtia says. **“Most of the teachers also thought they could not speak about reproductive health in school. But now most schools are interested in the project and want to be a part of it. So this is also a good step.”**

What motivates them?

“I am a mother of an adolescent—that’s why I’m happy that I can help other adolescents to be healthy and prevent diseases like STIs and HIV,” Dr. Nana Kvirtia. **“We’re working for a better future for our young people, for informed choice of our young people, to avoid the unhealthy consequences of smoking, drugs, alcohol, and to establish healthy lifestyles and to help them to have fruitful, healthy lives,”** Ekaterine Kikatunidze.

HERA, the Women’s Wellness Health Care Alliance, is a Georgian

nongovernmental organization that was started in 2000, a year after its founders started the Women’s Wellness Center. The Women’s Wellness Center, while also involved in medical diagnoses and treatment, has a special focus on prevention. HERA was created to spread these prevention messages outside of the Women’s Wellness Center and into the community. Trained nurse educators and community mobilizers provide community education about breast cancer, prenatal care, sexually transmitted infections, and psychological issues. With the HWG program, they also organize the Breast Health Awareness Walk in Kutaisi.

What motivates them?

“We wanted to do something good for Georgian women. When you’re in the clinic it’s not so easy. With an NGO you can do this work with the whole population. Our women lack messages on prevention, and that’s why it’s very important to begin working with these messages,” Dr. Marika Davituliani, cofounder.



Ekaterine Kikatunidze and Nana Kvirtia present adolescents’ impressive artwork submissions during the healthy lifestyles calendar competition.



Marika Davituliani demonstrates proper breast self-examination technique to women in Imereti.

“When a woman has information she will plan how to protect herself and her health.”
- Dr. Marika Davituliani, co-founder and head of HERA

MCCANN ERICKSON Georgia



McCann Erickson Georgia employees Maka Tsikoridze, Nini Jijikhia, Nina Nemsadze, and Ilona Maisuradze present their billboards which promote contraception.

McCann Erickson, an international advertising firm, has clients in Georgia as large and well-known as Coca-Cola, but they also have experience with social marketing—the firm developed a campaign for the condom brand Favorite and created an HIV prevention campaign as well. Now, McCann Erickson’s employees are excited to provide social marketing for the HWG program through television commercials and billboards that promote the use of contraception.

What motivates them?

“Women’s problems are close to us; we are women as well, and we are mothers with families as well as potential mothers, so the issue of family planning is very close to us,” Nina Nemsadze.

“For me, advertising is everything; I cannot imagine life without it. It’s passion,” Maka Tsikoridze says. **“It is very nice to watch your product on TV. The hotline was very active after the commercials about contraception, which means that the commercials worked: the message was disseminated successfully,”** Nina Jijikhia.



The CSMA team prepares for a pharmacist training, where pharmacists will learn how to discuss family planning with their customers.

The **Caucasus Social Marketing Association (CSMA)**, founded in 2002 by Population Services International staff members, was the first local nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the Caucasus region to work in the social marketing field. Through the HWG program, CSMA trained 536 pharmacists on reproductive health and family planning. **“We believe that if pharmacists are educated and motivated to change the behavior of the population, there is a big chance of success in reproductive health services. There’s trust between pharmacists and the population because of anonymity—because no one asks you what your name is and why you need contraceptives. The training was very useful for pharmacists because no one did these kinds of trainings for them before. Modern contraception is absolutely new for our region, and they needed information,”** Irakli Khvedelidze says.

What motivates them?

“What motivates me is the understanding that I’m doing good, innovative work. And always when we do something new we try to do something different – of course better than it was before. And our relationship with JSI was a chance for us to realize our potential and do something different,” Irakli Khvedelidze.



**კონტრაცეფცია-
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